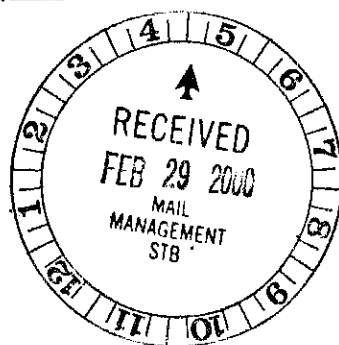




Halifax Port Authority Administration portuaire de Halifax

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Office of the Secretary

FEB 29 2000

February 29, 2000

Mr. Vernon A. Williams, Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
Office of the Secretary
Case Control Unit
Attention: STB Ex Parte No. 582
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
20423-0001

Dear Sir:

The Halifax Port Authority is responsible for management of port assets located in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. The Port relies to a considerable degree on efficient rail service in Canada and the United States. Our comments are in reference to Ex Parte 582 which is to be discussed on March 8, 2000.

We encourage your Board to focus on whether the proposed CN-BNSF arrangement is good for shippers, and not on the potential downstream effects. It is reasonable and practical to judge the CN/BNSF combination on its merits, just like any other proposed mergers.

For our customers - the shipping lines - service is key when choosing a port of call or an intermodal carrier. It is therefore very important that your Board review the service component of this combination. We also encourage the Surface Transportation Board to undertake its comprehensive review of the CN-BNSF proposal, but to be aware of positions taken by certain parties who oppose this arrangement without due regard to the interests of shippers, who after all pay for inefficiencies in our system.

Sincerely,

D. F. Ballefontaine
President & CEO

Canada